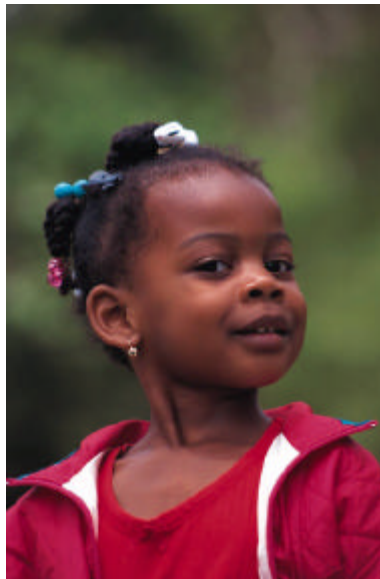


Chapter Four

Chapter Four



Staff and Provider Training

- 1. Citing any data available to the State on the numbers and timeframes of staff trained, discuss the effectiveness of the State's initial and ongoing training for all child welfare staff employed by the agency that include the basic skills and knowledge required for their positions.**

I. Overview

A comprehensive staff development and training program provides initial, advanced, and ongoing training to all staff. The initial training program is competency-based, and all staff are required to, and do complete the training before taking on case-carrying responsibilities.

Advanced training for experienced social workers and social work supervisors addresses specific needs identified through a statewide needs assessment process. Training is delivered in a variety of ways – in classrooms, by mentors, in user-friendly practice guides, and on-line.

Under the direction of the Deputy Assistant Secretary, the Office of Staff Development and Training (OSDT) programs have recently been reorganized. The training has been redesigned to focus more specifically on the knowledge and skills social workers need to engage in evidence-based practice that produces better outcomes for children and their families.

As of January 1, 2003, new social workers began attending the new six week, competency-based Training Academy. The program combines classroom teaching with a field component which allows new workers to “practice” what they are learning in the classroom setting. After the two-week field component, workers return to the classroom for two more weeks of integration and training.

The training academy was redesigned, as the previous model was not based on competencies. The new training design is based on the competencies needed to be successful in the field of child welfare. The new model for training has been based on the knowledge that adult learners need to integrate information from the classroom into practice.

The OSTD is also responsible for ongoing training and staff development within the entire administration. Each region has an employee who facilitates specific training in each office. The supervisor of Staff Development and other academy training staff meet with the Regional Training Coordinators on a quarterly basis. The meetings allow for coordination between the statewide training and regional training opportunities.

An on-line training needs assessment is sent to key stakeholders in the organization twice a

year. The goal of the training needs assessment is to identify the training needs of the organization and to develop subsequent training based on these identified needs. The OSDT gathers information from directors, program managers, and supervisors as to what the training needs are in the areas of emerging issues, practice trends and legislative issues.

II. Program and Policy Information

Entry-level training academy

The initial mandatory training for new social workers has been expanded from three weeks of classroom instruction to a six-week model that includes two weeks in the classroom, two weeks of structured training in the field, and a final two weeks in the classroom.

The initial training program curriculum includes:

- Intake and investigation,
- Risk assessment,
- Child maltreatment,
- Working with families,
- Working with children,
- Working with caregivers,
- Using the legal process to protect children,
- Engaging and interviewing adults, and
- Interviewing children.

The new model includes a variety of guest presenters, including foster parents, youth in care, parents who have received child welfare services, and community professionals.

Mandatory post-academy training

In addition to the six week academy, new social work staff are required to complete a variety of additional courses within their first year of employment. These courses include, but are not limited to: Basics of Substance Abuse, Indian Child Welfare, Sexual Abuse Interviewing (for CPS investigators) & New Employee Orientation.

Between March, 2002 and March, 2003, 182 staff attended the *Basic Indian Child Welfare Training*, and 41 attended the *Advanced Indian Child Welfare Training*.

Ongoing professional development opportunities for experienced staff

Ongoing training is offered on a regular basis to all staff who have completed the mandatory training requirements. Ongoing training is offered in locations throughout the state to ensure access to all social workers.

Some current courses for experienced staff include:

- Basic substance abuse and addiction,
- Permanency planning with substance-abusing parents,
- Neglect: A special challenge for safety, permanency and well-being,
- Child abuse investigation and interview training,
- Best practices in child welfare when working with sexually/physically aggressive youth,
- Child maltreatment and domestic violence: keeping children safe,
- Reasonable efforts when families are facing the challenges of mental health, and
- Behavioral management.

The University of Washington is contracted to provide training to CA to support ongoing developmental opportunities for staff. (Refer to Data on Number of Staff Trained for additional information on this area).

Training for supervisors

In response to a recent training needs assessment, specialized training is now offered for supervisors. All supervisors within CA (approximately 180) are required to take *Supervising for Excellence*, a three week training course developed and taught by staff at the University of Washington. The curriculum includes coaching, unit wellness, communication skills, and clinical supervision. This year the OSDT has developed a one-week advanced supervisory session called *Supervising for Excellence II*, which is designed for seasoned supervisors.

Supervisory Practice Forums are now held across the state. These forums have been designed based on information gathered on the needs assessment. The assessment identified that supervisors needed a place to “share best practice”. These forums are offered three times a year in five locations, and are designed to deliver information that is relevant to the supervisors and to provide an opportunity to discuss and share ideas related to the topic. The University of Washington has been instrumental in organizing the forums, and has gathered experts in the topic areas to present. Examples of forum topics are “Dealing with Compassion Fatigue” and “Innovative Practice in Chronic Neglect.” Supervisory Practice Forums were held in Seattle and Spokane in November, 2002, and were attended by 64 supervisors.

Conferences

The OSDT organizes a variety of conferences each year. Conferences are developed and presented based on the needs of CA employees. The needs assessment is one avenue to obtain this information as are general trends in the field of child welfare. The 2002-2003 fiscal year includes: the Administrative Secretary’s Conference; Leadership Conference, related to improving foster parent relationships; Managers Conference; Permanency Summit; as well as the Supervi

sory Practice Forums. (Refer to the section on Data on Number of Staffed Trained for additional information).

Staff also have opportunities, subject to budget limitations, to attend other conferences within Washington and nationally, such as the Children's Justice Conference, Permanency Summit, and Regional Reasonable Efforts Symposia.

Training calendar

The OSDT produces an online training calendar that lists training and conferences scheduled in the next six months. The calendar is updated monthly and sent out via e-mail to all staff.

Staff Development and Performance Plans

Development and performance plans are developed annually for all agency staff. Individual employee goals within these plans are linked to broader agency goals. These plans are evaluated and renewed each year.

Agency responsiveness to emerging practice issues and training needs

The OSDT conducts an online training needs assessment every six months. This on-line survey is sent out twice a year (May and December) and provides an avenue for CA staff to communicate the needs of staff to the OSDT. The needs assessment seeks the view of management, including directors, program managers, and supervisors.

The needs assessment reviews and assesses the need for existing and new training, to respond to new legislation and emerging practice issues. For example, in the Fall of 2000, DSHS and the CA launched the *Kids Come First* initiative. The centerpiece of this initiative is a comprehensive risk assessment model, and the application of that model to structured decision-making at nine points in the life cycle of CPS and CWS cases. The OSDT developed training courses on the principles and practices of risk assessment and the use of risk assessment tools for social workers. Over 1,200 staff have completed this mandatory training.

Linkages to schools of social work

CA has strong working partnerships with all state schools of social work. The Northwest Institute at the University of Washington School of Social Work leads this partnership. The Institute provides training to CA staff and also participates in the Consortium of the Schools of Social Work. This consortium meets quarterly and includes Eastern Washington University, University of Washington and Walla Walla Community College. Each of these institutions has Social Work Programs and provides faculty and staff as presenters in a variety of the post academy offerings. CA develops contracts with the Institute, which in turn contracts with professionals in the field of Social Work from the colleges in the consortium and other professionals in the field.

The Northwest Institute for Children and Families and CA have applied for a training grant from the Children's Bureau. The proposal for the grant is a program designed to impact the recruitment and retention of a diverse professional workforce for child welfare by focusing on building an agency culture where staff would want to work. If awarded, this training would augment existing training with new content and transfer of training support. Announcements as to the grant recipients are to be made by September 30, 2003.

The Stipend IV-E program is also a result of the strong relationship between CA and the University of Washington and Eastern Washington University. This federally funded program enables agency staff to pursue their MSW degree, while working full time. The stipend program is also available to students outside CA who are willing to commit to a child welfare career. Prospective students complete an application process, which includes an interview by the University of Washington and CA staff. Once admitted to the stipend program, a student receives a dollar amount that generally pays for their tuition and books.

When a student graduates, they must be on a social worker register for two months in order to be considered for employment with CA. Once employed, a graduate must make a two-year commitment to the CA in order to fulfill the "pay-back" requirement. The goal of this program is to provide the CA with qualified social workers to fill positions in the child welfare field. An added benefit to this program is the increase in social worker retention.

For the Winter Quarter, 2003, Eastern Washington University had a total of 50 students in Stipend IV-E program, of which 21 were CA staff. The University of Washington had a total of 111 students, of which 62 were CA staff.

The graduating 2003 cohort from Eastern Washington University had twelve students who were in the stipend program. Two were already employees with CA, five were employed with CA before they reached graduation, and the remaining five were employed by CA following graduation, which was a 100% success rate.

The University of Washington program has 18 graduates in the 2003 cohort that were not already employed by the agency. Since that time, 11 students have been hired, or 61% of those that graduated. Many of the remaining students have interviews scheduled with the department.

Utilizing technology for staff development and training

Through CA's Intranet, staff has ready access to policy and procedure manuals, training schedules, and a variety of resource materials to support ongoing learning.

Black Board is a learning management software program that enables online training to be provided to staff. An initial pilot training program was completed using the reorganization of case files as a training curriculum. This pilot was successful based on the feedback received from participants. The method of instruction is self-paced, effective and easy to use. Currently, addi

tional curriculum is being developed to continue to utilize this efficient and cost-effective method of training.

The OSDT has purchased an online training data base (ASPEN) that will proved for online registration for all training courses and conferences. In addition, the system will enable training coordinators, supervisors and staff direct access to their training records through their desktop computer. This online training database will be operational in the fall of 2003.

Mechanisms for linking to Continuous Quality Improvement Efforts

The new position of Deputy Assistant Secretary was created to oversee staff training and quality improvement. Drawing these two sections together under a single leader facilitates integration of quality improvement needs in the design and delivery of staff and provider training. One recent manifestation of this linkage is the use of case record review data, gathered by the Quality Improvement staff, into the Academy training curriculum. In addition, the Office of Children's Administration Research (OCAR) meets regularly with trainers at the academy to review new research.

III. Data on the Number of Staff Trained

Regional training coordinators and human resource staff maintain training records of staff. These records and statistics are not always up to date and have integrity issues. The OSDT and Training has purchased, and is in the process of implementing, a comprehensive online training database, ASPEN. All 2,500 CA staff have been "loaded" into the system. All 5,000 foster parents will be loaded into the system by October 2003. Training on this new system has been provided to regional system managers. Training for staff and supervisors who will utilize the to register for and track training records will be completed by October. The system is expected to be operational in the Fall of 2003. The online training database will provide for more efficient registration and more effective and immediate tracking of employee compliance with mandatory training requirements. ASPEN has the capacity to generate more than 100 training reports.

Training Academy

All case carrying social workers must begin Training Academy training within 15 days of beginning employment. Between July 2001 and June 2003 some 257 staff attended required Training Academy. In order to determine if all case carrying new staff attended Academy as required by policy a special review was conducted in 2001. Initial results indicated 85% compliance with this policy. Thirteen (13) staff were found not to have completed the required academy training. A further review of the training records of these staff concluded that only one employee did not complete Academy due early departure from agency employment. As a result compliance with the Training Academy attendance policy was 99%.

Post Academy Training

The majority of post Academy training is provided through a contract with the University of Washington. As can be seen from Chart 1, below, 1,228 staff participated in 13 post academy courses during 2002-2003.

In addition, 182 staff attended the Basic Indian Child Welfare training and a further 41 attended the Advanced Indian Child welfare training in 2002-2003.

Chart 1. University of Washington Contracted Trainings 2002-2003

TRAINING	DATES PROVIDED	TOTAL ATTENDEES
Behavioral Mgmt. Through Relationship & Engagement	3/11/03; 3/17/03; 3/24/03; 4/7/03; 4/11/03; 6/6/03	82
Division of Licensed Resources	4/24/02; 5/14/03	73
Domestic Violence & Child Maltreatment	1/22/03; 2/12/03; 5/30/03	93
Neglect: A special Challenge	3/11/03; 3/12/03; 3/19/03; 5/21/03; 6/13/03	107
Permanency Planning from Day One	2/21/02; 4/11/02; 4/16/02; 4/17/02; 4/25/02; 5/1/02; 11/13/02; 12/10/02; 1/30/03	227
Reasonable Efforts/Mental Health	11/7/02; 11/20/02; 12/3/02; 1/7/03; 2/11/03; 3/5/03	128
Best Practice/SAY	12/10/02; 1/14/03; 1/21/03; 2/11/03; 2/18/03; 4/15/03	134
Advanced Substance Abuse	12/12/02; 1/23/03; 3/6/03; 3/11/03; 5/8/03; 5/21/03; 5/29/03	142
Supervising for Excellence	2/28/02; 6/6/02; 2/27/03; 4/23/03; 5/5/03	92
Supervisory Forum - Chronic Neglect	11/5/02; 11/6/02	51
Supervisory Forum/Solution-Focused	6/10/03; 6/12/03	48
Supervisory Forum - Advanced Topics	4/25/03	19
Supervisory Forum - Unit Wellness	2/14/03; 2/20/03; 2/21/03	32
	<i>TOTAL ATTENDEES</i>	<i>1, 228</i>

(Source: Children's Administration, Office of Staff Development and Training)

Conferences

The OSDT presents a number of professional conferences for CA staff each year. As indicated in Chart 2, 3,379 staff attended 22 conferences over the last four years. In addition, CA staff attend other state and out-of-state conferences each year.

Conferences

The Office of Staff Development and Training presents a number of professional conferences for CA staff each year. As indicated in Chart 2, 3,379 staff attended 22 conferences over the last four years. In addition, CA staff attend other state and out of state conferences each year.

Chart 2. Conferences Schedule

Date	Conference Title	Number of Attendees
November 19, 1999	Administrative Secretary Conference	55
March 30, 2000	Home Support Specialist Conference	97
June 6, 2000	Project Management Training	25
October 4, 2000	National COA Meeting	80
October 26, 2000	Statewide Supervisors/Managers Conference	250
October 31, 2000	Partnering with Parents Conference	200
November 30, 2000	Administrative Support Conference	42
January 11, 2001	Partnering with Parents Conference	275
February 13, 2001	Signs of Safety	85
March 7, 2001	Peer Review Training	25
March 22, 2001	Administrative Support Conference	37
April 11, 2001	Kids Come First Admin. Retreat	100
April 23, 2001	Kids Come First Conference	350
July 9, 2001	PRIDE Conference	375
October 1, 2001	CPS Symposium	160
October 10, 2001	Statewide Supervisors/Managers Conference	250
October 16, 2001	Kids Come First Line Staff Conference	430
April 30, 2002	Recruiter's Summit	60
October 14, 2002	Administrative Secretary Conference	45
April 23, 2003	Leadership for High Performance	38
June 18, 2003	Statewide Supervisors/Managers Conference	175
July 31, 2003	Launching Futures Together (Adolescent Conference)	225
TOTAL = 22 Conferences		3,379 Attendees

(Source: Children's Administration, Office of Staff Development and Training)

IV. Training Resources

Training is delivered and coordinated through the OSDT, contracted trainers such as the University of Washington, and Regional Training Coordinators.

The Regional Training Coordinator function is provided by one or more regional staff. Most regions do not have a full-time Regional Coordinator; usually only a portion of an FTE supports this function.

The Regional Training Coordinators and University of Washington work closely with the OSDT's Registrar to track training through the ASPEN system.

The OSDT's budget is adequate to provide the current level of training. The training capacity is expanding therefore additional funding may be necessary. Efforts are being made to examine ways to more efficiently utilize the training resources (both financial and human) that we have available within CA.

V. Initiatives

Specialized training

The previous model for the Training Academy included three weeks of mandatory training, some of which was not pertinent to every worker's area of employment. In addition, there were specialized tracks of academy that were offered periodically throughout the year for these employees to attend. When the new academy model was developed, the initial training became more focused for those workers in Child Protective Services (CPS) and Child Welfare Services (CWS). This required a re-design in the training program for specialized field areas.

Each of the specialized training tracks will now begin with a two-week "core" training program, providing an introduction to CA and child welfare. Participants will return to their field offices, where they will have a structured field experience that includes "shadowing" experienced workers. They will then return for another week of specialized training in their particular area.

The purpose of this training is to prepare workers for practice in the field, who are not primarily involved with CPS or CWS.

Additionally, within CA, there are social workers who are in need of general CA training but due to their specialized positions (Adoptions & Family Reconciliation Services) most of their training needs are based on specific competencies that are unique to their positions.

Training evaluation

Historically, the evaluation of training provided by CA was limited to participant feedback at the end of each training program, and to feedback from occasional focus groups. The OSDT is developing a four-phase evaluation model through the support University of Washington's School of Social Work Evaluation staff. Phases I and II of the evaluation model are expected to be implemented in 2003. The phases are as follows:

Phase I -- Evaluation is conducted at the end of the academy training to assess the training experience and the trainers.

Phase II -- Evaluation of the actual transfer of knowledge and skills from training to the field experience.

Phase III --Evaluation is conducted six months following the academy training, and is focused on what information the social workers retained, and whether or not it was useful.

Phase IV --Evaluation is focused on determining if the training led to better outcomes for children and families.

Mentoring Program for New Social Workers

A six-month mentoring program for new social workers is being developed, and will be implemented in the Fall of 2003. The mentoring program is designed to continue the learning process for new social workers. The mentoring program is based on the knowledge that the new social worker needs more guidance and education than they will receive in a six-week academy model, or from their supervisors in the field. During the six-month mentoring experience the new workers will be given regular feedback and guidance as they begin their “practice” in the field.

Supervisors’ Academy

A Supervisors’ Academy is being developed and is planned for implementation in the Fall of 2003. The competencies for the supervisory academy will be developed by mid-summer. Once the competencies have been identified, a training model will be developed and subsequent curriculum based on these competencies. The Supervisor’s Academy will incorporate the elements from the existing supervisors training.

The need for more training for supervisors has come from a variety of sources including the recent “Pride and Passion Survey.” The goal is to provide more comprehensive competency based training for supervisors, which will then impact the effectiveness of social work practice within the state of Washington.

Indian Child Welfare Training

In order to ensure compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), the Training Academy has expanded the training provided to social work staff regarding Indian Child Welfare (ICW). The training includes information on ICW at the training academy, followed by a two day specialized course. In addition, there is a one day on-line follow-up course, and a two-day cross cultural skills training that are also offered. (Refer to Chapter Six: Agency Responsiveness to the Community, question four, for additional information on this training).

Succession Planning

CA is committed to developing the leadership skills of current staff as well as nurturing the ad-

vancement of potential leaders within the agency. An integral part of leadership development is succession planning. A statewide workgroup comprised of various leaders within CA will begin work in September to develop a comprehensive succession plan for presentation to agency leadership in December. Key components of the succession plan will be mentoring, leadership training and professional development.

ASPEN

A new system is under development (using the software program “ASPEN”) to track numbers of statewide training participants, individual training histories of agency staff, to support professional development planning, and to provide online registration. ASPEN has the capability of running more than 100 reports regarding training and statistics related to the number of social workers attending post-academy courses.

VI. Lessons Learned During the Statewide Assessment

CA operates a comprehensive initial training program for new social workers that meets and exceeds federal requirements. CA’s new intensive, competency-based model for initial staff training ensures a solid knowledge level and skill base for all CA social workers. The availability of online practice guides and advanced training further support competent practice. CA’s Staff Development and Training Program also meets and exceeds federal requirements for ongoing staff training.

Two separate training programs currently exist – one for staff, and another for providers. While both systems are well organized, there may be benefit in aligning these systems more closely to ensure that both systems convey the same message and practice principles, and place equal emphasis on encouraging staff, parents and providers to work in partnership.

This is particularly important given the clear focus of the Foster Care Improvement Plan on “culture change” that builds a greater sense of partnership between agency staff and foster parents. Training could be a powerful vehicle for influencing positive change in this high priority area.

The primary problem identified during this assessment is the tension between wanting new staff to have substantive training prior to taking on case-carrying responsibilities, and the desire to deploy them quickly to help with caseload. This tension existed even under the previous three-week model of new staff training. While there is broad agreement that the quality of training in the new, six-week Training Academy is a significant improvement, it also places additional burdens on the field by delaying deployment of new staff for an additional three weeks.

The systematic evaluation of training programs is at the very beginning stage, and is much needed. To date there is limited information on the quality or effectiveness of the training provided.

Alternative training delivery methods, such as online training, are not highly developed for staff use. The positive reports from the “Blackboard” pilot suggest that more online training could be helpful.

CA offers a robust training program through the OSDT. Additional training is available to employees through the state Department of Personnel. In the future, DSHS is working towards a more collaborative approach to succession planning & mentoring, but this is still in the planning stages.

The new training academy has not been in operation long enough to complete a comprehensive evaluation of the training. This will need to be built into the new system.

Strengths

- CA’s new intensive, competency based model for initial staff training ensures a solid knowledge level and skill base for all CA social workers. The availability of on-line practice guides and advanced training further support competent practice.
- The expansion of the post-academy advanced training provides more training opportunities for experienced staff.
- There are increased training opportunities for supervisors.
- A new system is under development (using the ASPEN software) to track not only global numbers of statewide training attendance, but also individual training histories. This will support professional development planning.

Challenges

- Two separate training programs currently exist – one for staff, and one for providers. While the respective systems are each well organized, there may be benefit in combining or more clearly aligning these systems.
- There is limited utilization of alternative training delivery methods (other than classroom training), such as on-line training.

Promising Practices

The new, competency-based six-week academy for initial training is widely viewed as an improvement, even though it keeps new workers from taking on case responsibilities for an additional three weeks. This can make it difficult for offices that are in need of new workers to take on cases. The new competency-based academy model has been in place since January 1, 2003.

COA Self-Study

The Council on Accreditation requires the promotion of competence in personnel by providing regular supervision and training. According to the Statewide Self-Study for CA, this is an area in which the agency meets the requirements.

- 2. Citing any data available to the State, discuss the effectiveness of the State's training of current and prospective foster and adoptive families and the staff of State-licensed or approved child care institutions that care for children in the State's care or responsibilities that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties.**

I. Overview

CA has recently improved its pre-service and in-service training curriculum for foster parents. The pre-service training, which is 18 hours long, provides information to help potential foster and adoptive parents in making their final decision about foster parenting or adoption. In addition, the training also helps CA obtain the information needed to make initial decisions about whether or not those who attended the training are appropriate resources for foster care and/or adoption. Pre-service training is required before foster parenting licenses may be issued. The in-service curriculum, which is 60 hours in length, is offered to foster parents, but not required. The in-service curriculum focuses on skills that help licensed foster parents care for emotionally, mentally, or physically handicapped children in a culturally competent manner.

II. Program Description

In January 2002, the state adopted and fully implemented the Parent Resource for Information Development Education (PRIDE) foster parent training curriculum. The PRIDE curriculum is used to conduct the pre-service and in-service trainings in Washington. This training curriculum replaced the Foster Parent Scope training and other pre-service, orientation and adoption/orientation/training, and was implemented in January, 2002.

The PRIDE training was intended to increase the state's support to foster parents and to increase their skill level. PRIDE is a national program developed by the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA). It has been proven effective nationally in increasing the ability of foster and adoptive parents to meet the special needs of children placed in their care.

The foster parent training program is being coordinated with other initiatives implemented through the Foster Care Improvement Plan (FCIP), all of which are designed to build greater support for the foster parent and create greater teamwork and partnership in providing for the needs of children in care. Among the skills emphasized in the PRIDE curriculum are:

- Protecting and nurturing;
- Meeting children's developmental needs and addressing developmental delays;
- Supporting relationships between children and their families;
- Connecting children to safe, nurturing relationships intended to last a lifetime; and
- Working as a member of a professional team.

Training plans are developed in the regions so that each session can address the individual and unique training needs of each community.

III. Policy Information

Pre-Service Training

The Revised Code of Washington (RCW), Chapter 74.13.250 directs that a prospective foster parent complete pre-service training prior to the issuance of a foster care license. The curriculum is, on average, 18 to 20 hours, and includes a two-hour orientation session. Completion of the training may be delayed upon approval of CA, for up to 90 days, on a case-by-case basis. The waiver only allows for a delay in the time to complete the training. All foster parents are required to complete the training prior to licensure being completed. No licenses are issued until the training is completed.

Foster home licensors in local offices teach the pre-service curriculum. However, on occasion, the in-service trainers assist in offices where there is a need. By late 2003 it is expected that all pre-service and in-service trainings will be assumed by the Foster Parent/Kinship Care Training Institute, through the Division of Licensed Resources (DLR). Recently nine FTE's were designated for this training expansion. It is anticipated that over the next fiscal year additional FTE's will be designated for foster parent training.

Persons interested in becoming licensed for foster care by a private child-placing agency may attend pre-service training sessions presented by that agency. The private agency is required to provide training equivalent to that provided by the department. Although the private agencies are encouraged to use the PRIDE curriculum for their training, they are not required to.

In-Service Training

The PRIDE in-service curriculum consists of a 60-hour foster parenting course for licensed foster parents. The in-service training course was developed in compliance with mandates of Chapter 74.13.310 RCW. The Foster Parent/Kinship Care Institute provides program managers, who work with regions on the development and implementation of pre and in-service training.

The program managers further conduct local needs assessments to design special topic training sessions. The budget allots \$30,000 per region per year for these workshops. In-service training is considered voluntary for foster parents, and is not connected to the length of the license or payment for the care of children. Between 2002 and 2003, approximately 6% of foster parents attended the in-service training.

Special Topics Workshops

Special topic workshops are three to six hour workshops that are requested by the foster parents in their regions. Frequent topics include:

- Behavior management and de-escalation,

- Working with birth families,
- Attachment disorders,
- Sexually aggressive youth,
- Adolescence depression, and
- Grief and loss.

Workshops are offered to foster parents on a voluntary basis. The workshops are conducted in classroom settings and via web-cast. Between June, 2001 and July, 2002, a total of 2,552 foster parents attended the specialized workshops. (Note: the 2,552 were individual foster parents, not foster homes).

Sexually Aggressive and Physically Aggressive Youth Training

The state has developed extensive training for foster parents and staff who care for children who are sexually aggressive and physically aggressive. Behavior management specialists present the Sexually Aggressive Training (SAT) and the Physically Aggressive Training (PAT) in video format, a self-study course, and six hours in a classroom environment.

First Aid/CPR/Blood Borne Pathogens Training

Attendance at these special training sessions for First Aid/CPR and Blood Borne Pathogens training increased during the fiscal year June 2001-July 2002, primarily due to the change in WAC requiring that both adult caregivers in a two-parent foster home complete First Aid/CPR training. Each region has been allotted \$20,000 per year for this training. More than 2,700 foster parents completed these required training classes between June 2001 and July 2002.

IV. Initiatives

Web-Cast Training

Web-cast training sessions for foster parents are live video, streamed onto CA's web site. Foster parents can watch the session, call in, or e-mail and have their questions addressed on live broadcast. Four sessions were offered in 2002:

- Dependency Court Process,
- Attachment Issues,
- Working with Behaviorally Challenging Behavior, and
- De-escalation Techniques.

Some of the more popular workshops have been archived to enable foster parents to watch them at their convenience. In addition to the above sessions, the Web-Cast Training is being expanded to include specialized training on working with younger children who are sexually

aggressive, kinship care, respite care, Indian Child Welfare, and specialized web training in Spanish.

V. Lessons Learned During the Statewide Assessment

CA does not have data at this time to evaluate the foster parents' assessment of training received since CA changed its training curricula. The Foster Parent Institute does not have a comprehensive training evaluation model in place. Participant feedback comments are the only mechanism in place and the data collected from these are not analyzed.

For purposes of gathering information for the *Statewide Assessment*, an electronic survey was conducted with foster parents and foster parent liaisons regarding training issues. The survey was conducted by the Foster Parent Association of Washington (FPAWS). The following summarizes the results of the surveys that were returned: *(Note: The sample (N=10) indicates that only 10 foster parents were queried. There are currently 4,300 DCFS licensed foster parents in Washington State. This is a very small sample, and the results may not be generalized to all foster parents).*

Foster parents were asked to rank their responses on a scale of 1 (very little) to 7 (very high).

- Foster parents and foster parent liaisons were asked how effective they felt foster parent training was in promoting partnerships. The response from the focus group was 3.9.
- Foster parents and foster parent liaisons were asked how they would rate the overall quality and effectiveness of the foster parent training they received. The response from the focus group was 4.0.
- Foster parents and foster parent liaisons were asked how accessible and responsive Children's Administration staff from the Department of Licensing Resources were in providing training and technical assistance. The response from the focus group was 4.7.
- Foster parents and foster parent liaisons were asked how responsive the state staff were on suggestions for improvements. The response from the focus group was 3.1.
- Foster parents and foster parent liaisons were asked how consistent the state was in applying licensing standards equally to all foster homes. The response from the focus group was 4.1.

Strengths

- New additions have been made to the foster parent training, such as web-cast training, and specialized training on issues that foster parents have requested. Between June, 2001 and July, 2002, a total of 2,552 foster parents attended special workshops.

- Attendance at these special training sessions for First Aid/CPR and Blood Borne Pathogens training increased during the fiscal year June, 2001 and July, 2002, due to the requirement that both adult caregivers in a two-parent foster home attend.
- The new PRIDE curriculum was implemented January, 2002 to train foster parents state-wide.

Challenges

- The focus groups of foster parents were asked if they believe foster parent training conveyed the same messages and practice principals that DCFS staff receive. The group responded that they felt that staff and foster parents are sent different messages during training.
- Pre-service training is required for new foster parents. In-service training is recommended, but not required for licensure. The in-service training is currently only required for those foster parents who are required to complete a corrective action to maintain their license.

Promising practices

The PRIDE curriculum is a nationally recognized curriculum that provides a consistent format for training foster parents. The curriculum does not include education on cultural sensitivity. The Foster Parent/Kinship Care Training Institute is working to develop additional training to address this need.

The Web-Cast Training opportunities continue to expand to allow foster parents in rural areas to gain access to the necessary training. In addition to providing training for foster parents in Washington, the foster parent Web-Cast Trainings have been accessed by foster parents from other states (e.g. Oklahoma, Florida, California, New Zealand). As other states have budget cuts in the training budgets for foster parents, many foster parents rely upon other resources for training, including the CA Foster Parent Website.

COA Self-Study

The Council on Accreditation (COA) standards requires the organization to educate all foster or kinship parents to provide appropriate care to the child. According to the Statewide Self-Study for Children's Administration, the agency is currently passing in this area. (*Refer to COA Standard S-21, Foster and Kinship Care Services, for additional information*).